



## What is it?

### Points To Remember About Behçet's Disease

- Behçet's disease causes sores in the mouth or on the genitals (sex organs). Swelling, heat, redness, and pain in the eyes and other parts of the body can also occur.
- Keeping a record of symptoms can help a doctor to diagnose Behçet's disease.
- Because Behçet's disease can affect different parts of your body, you may need to see more than one doctor.
- You can't give Behçet's disease to someone else.
- There is no cure for Behçet's disease. Treatment, such as medicines, rest, and exercise, will help reduce pain and prevent serious problems.

Behçet's disease can affect different parts of your body. If you have the disease, you probably have sores in the mouth or on the genitals (sex organs). More serious symptoms can include swelling, heat, redness, and pain in the eyes and other parts of the body.

The disease is named after the doctor who first described it, Dr. Hulusi Behçet.

## Who gets it?

Behçet's disease is common in some parts of the world, but it is rare in the United States. Behçet's disease tends to develop in people in their twenties or thirties, but people of all ages can develop this disease.

## What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of Behçet's disease differ for each person. Some people have only mild symptoms, such as sores in the mouth. Others have more severe problems, such as vision loss. Symptoms may appear, disappear, and then reappear. If you are having symptoms, then you are going through a "flare."

The five most common symptoms of Behçet's disease are:

- Mouth sores.
- Genital sores.
- Other skin sores.
- Swelling of parts of the eye.
- Arthritis (pain, swelling, and stiffness in the joints).

Less common symptoms include:

- Swelling in the brain and spinal cord.
- Blood clots.
- Swelling in the digestive system (the parts of the body that digest food).
- Blindness.

## What causes it?

Most symptoms of Behçet's disease are due to swelling of the blood vessels. Doctors aren't sure what causes this. You may have a gene that causes a problem in your immune system, making it more likely you will get the disease. Something in the environment, such as bacteria or viruses, may then cause the immune system to attack its blood vessels.

You can't give Behçet's disease to someone else.

## Is there a test?

Behçet's disease is hard to diagnose because:

- The symptoms do not usually appear all at once.
- There are other illnesses that have similar symptoms.
- There is no single test to diagnose Behçet's disease.

Symptoms used to determine if you have the disease include:

- Mouth sores at least three times in 12 months.

- Two of the following:
  - Genital sores that go away and come back.
  - Swelling of parts of the eye (with vision loss).
  - Skin sores.
  - Small red bumps that appear after your doctor pricks your skin with a needle.

Because it may take months or even years for all symptoms to appear, it may take a long time before you will know if you have Behçet's disease. You can help your doctor diagnose the disease by keeping a record of your symptoms and when they occur.

## How is it treated?

There is no cure for Behçet's disease. Treatment will help reduce pain and prevent serious problems. Common treatments include:

- Medicines:
  - Corticosteroids—medicines to reduce pain and swelling.
  - Other drugs to help control the immune system, reduce swelling, and prevent symptoms.
- Rest when having symptoms.
- Moderate exercise, such as swimming or walking, when you do not have symptoms.

## Who treats it?

Because Behçet's disease can affect different parts of your body, you may need to see more than one doctor. It may be helpful to have one doctor, such as a rheumatologist, to manage your treatment and monitor side effects from medicines.

Some doctors who treat Behçet's disease symptoms are:

- Dermatologists, who treat skin sores.
- Gynecologists (for women) or urologists, both of whom treat genital sores.
- Rheumatologists, who treat arthritis and other disorders involving swelling, redness, and pain in parts of the body.
- Ophthalmologists, who treat your eyes.
- Gastroenterologists, who treat digestive problems.
- Hematologists, who treat blood problems.
- Neurologists, who treat problems of the brain and spinal cord.

## For More Info

**U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

Toll free: 888-INFO-FDA (888-463-6332)

Website: <https://www.fda.gov>

Drugs@FDA at <https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf>. Drugs@FDA is a searchable catalog of FDA-approved drug products.

### **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics**

Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

### **National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research**

Website: <https://www.nidcr.nih.gov>

### **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases**

Website: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov>

### **National Eye Institute**

Website: <https://www.nei.nih.gov>

### **National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke**

Website: <https://www.ninds.nih.gov>

### **American College of Rheumatology**

Website: <https://www.rheumatology.org>

### **American Behçet's Disease Association**

Website: <http://www.bhecets.com>

### **American Skin Association**

Website: <http://www.americanskin.org>

### **Autoinflammatory Alliance**

Website: <http://www.autoinflammatory.org>

If you need more information about available resources in your language or other languages, please visit our webpages below or contact the NIAMS Information Clearinghouse at [NIAMSInfo@mail.nih.gov](mailto:NIAMSInfo@mail.nih.gov).

- [Asian Language Health Information](#)
- [Spanish Language Health Information](#)

### **Join a Clinical Trial**

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[¿Qué es el síndrome de Behçet? \(Esenciales: hojas informativas de fácil lectura\)](#)

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[Behçet's Disease, Easy-to-Read Fast Facts](#)

[Behçet's Disease, Questions and Answers about  
Autoinflammatory Diseases, Understanding](#)